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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000080

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCOR](#) [SNAR](#) [MZ](#)
SUBJECT: NARCOTRAFFICKING ON UPSWING, CONCERNS ABOUT
GOVERNMENT CONNECTIONS

REF: A. 09 MAPUTO 1309
[1](#)B. 09 MAPUTO 1291
[1](#)C. 09 MAPUTO 713
[1](#)D. 08 MAPUTO 1228
[1](#)E. 08 MAPUTO 1098

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman for reasons 1.4 (b+d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Mozambique has been called the second most active narcotics transit point in Africa after Guinea Bissau (Ref C). Despite anti-corruption rhetoric, the ruling FRELIMO party has not shown much serious political will to combat narcotrafficking. Mohamed Bashir Suleman (MBS), described as the largest narcotrafficker in Mozambique, has direct ties to President Guebuza and former President Chissano. Other traffickers bribe both high and low level officials. Chief of Customs Domingos Tivane is a significant recipient of these narcotrafficking-related bribes. Police officials told Embassy officers that they are unwilling to go after "big fish" narcotraffickers because of their ties to senior officials. The Ministries of Interior and Finance have recently back-pedaled on U.S. efforts to engage and assist in narcotrafficking and money laundering, a significant associated problem. The management of the port of Nacala, infamous for allowing the flow of drug transshipments from southwest Asia, was recently taken over by Celso Correia, principal of Insitec, Ltd, a Guebuza front company. A new casino law reduces gambling restrictions in Mozambique, providing another avenue for money laundering. U.S. support to Border Security and the Mozambican military (FADM) has resulted in modest seizures of money and drugs. Post looks forward to an upcoming INL visit to help elaborate a comprehensive counter-narcotics trafficking (CNT) strategy. Any such CNT strategy, after first gauging political will which at this point is suspect, should consider the strengthening of land and maritime border security, professionalization of the police force, educational programming for prosecutors on Mozambican CNT laws already in place, and development of a financial intelligence capability. END SUMMARY.

NARCOTRAFFICKERS BLANDISHING GRM AND FRELIMO

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Mohamed Bashir Suleman (MBS), described by multiple contacts as the largest narcotrafficker in Mozambique, contributes heavily to FRELIMO's coffers, and has provided significant financial backing to the campaigns of former President Joaquim Chissano and current President Armando Guebuza. (Note: See TD-314/085221-09 regarding written communication from the Office of the Presidency directing certain containers be exempted from standard scanning and scrutiny at the Port of Maputo. End Note.) Traffickers, including MBS, Gulam Rassul, and the Ayoub

Family (Ref A) routinely bribe police, immigration and customs officials to ensure that drugs can enter the country. Domingos Tivane, Chief of the Customs Service, is a significant recipient of bribes from narcotraffickers (Ref B), and he recently purchased real estate in Maputo valued at well beyond what his government salary should be able to afford.

POLICE UNWILLING TO PURSUE MANY DRUG CASES

14. (S/NF) Senior members of the Mozambican Police (PRM) have told Emboffs that potential CNT training would only help them with small-scale traffickers, while other "big fish" would remain too large to catch. Of the more than ten cocaine and heroin seizures in 2009 at the Maputo airport, none have resulted in prosecutions. A senior law enforcement official has admitted to Emboffs that most drug seizures are not made public and not prosecuted because police and customs officials use such seizures to enrich themselves. Such officials extract bribes, and may retain the drugs seized for resale. Despite repeated requests, the Minister of Interior (charged with overall responsibility for police and for counter-narcotics) has refused to meet with the CDA to discuss increased joint CNT efforts. The GRM recently raised objections to an offer for a U.S. Department of Treasury official to be embedded into the Financial Crimes Unit, after initially agreeing to and supporting the offer.

PROVINCIAL PORTS ATTRACTIVE FOR DRUG TRANSITS

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15. (S/NF) The port of Nacala in particular is believed to be a major recipient of narcotics from Southwest Asia. In July 2009, Celso Correia, who is a principal in Insitec, Ltd, (a company whose major shareholder is President Armando Guebuza-septel), was installed as head of the Northern Development Corridor (CDN) which includes the port of Nacala and the northern rail network. Shortly thereafter, Ghulam Rassul Moti, who has smuggled hashish and heroin into northern Mozambique since at least 1993 (Ref B) greatly reduced bribes to local Nacala and Nampula municipal authorities and made the payments instead directly to senior FRELIMO officials. Nampula Mayor Castro Serafim was reported to be particularly irritated that these monthly payments had been re-routed straight to higher-level FRELIMO leaders.

NEW CASINO LAW CAUSE FOR CONCERN

16. (S) In January, President Guebuza signed into law a new "Casino Bill." Passed by the National Assembly (AR) in June 2009, the law relaxes restrictions on gambling in Mozambique, reducing the minimum investment for a casino from \$15 to \$8 million, legalizing online gambling, and allowing slot machines to be positioned in otherwise non-gambling environments. The law also passes financial control of casinos from the Ministry of Finance to the less rigorous Ministry of Tourism. This bill was passed to encourage tourism; however, given Mozambique's minimal financial controls, the law will effectively reduce the barriers to narcotraffickers looking to launder funds. Nazir Lunat, a FRELIMO parliamentarian and influential imam in Maputo, recently resigned from his position in the National Assembly (AR) because of concerns over the law allowing casino liberalizations.

USG SUPPORT HAS HAD POSITIVE OUTCOMES

¶7. (S) With USG support, there has been some progress in combating drug trafficking. Using INL funds, Embassy Maputo, working with the Embassy of Portugal, provided training to border guards which resulted in the seizure of U.S. \$2.5 million in cash and the arrest of two Pakistani smugglers (Ref E). In mid-May 2009 police seized U.S. \$5 million in heroin at the Ressano Garcia border crossing into South Africa. Employing 7-meter, rigid hull inflatable boats donated by the DoD using Section 1206 funds, the Mozambican navy has interdicted several drug shipments near the coast, most recently in December.

COMMENT: COMPREHENSIVE CNT STRATEGY NEEDED

¶8. (S) Post looks forward to an upcoming INL visit to help elaborate a comprehensive CNT strategy. USG interests in CNT in Mozambique involve multiple USG departments, including State, DoD, DoJ, DHS, and Treasury. Our CNT strategy must first address ways to strengthen the GRM's political will to address narcotrafficking, while preparing Mozambique with a host of programs, to include strengthening of land and maritime border security, professionalization of the police force, educational programming for prosecutors on Mozambican CNT laws already in place, and development of a financial intelligence capability.